

Application No. 09/839342
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Amendment
Attorney Docket No. E14.2B-9321-US01

Remarks

Claims 21-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Troller (Sanitation in Food Processing) in view of Lange (Detergents and Cleaners. A Handbook for Formulators). It is asserted in the Office Action that Troller teaches that Clean-in-Place (CIP) systems are conventionally used in dairy operations and shows a conventional sequence of a CIP cleaning (See Pages 44-51), except for specific recitation of the use of the specifically claimed neutralized anionic polymers as surfactants. The Office Action asserts that Lange in his Handbook evidences that such surfactants were conventional in CIP formulations for food processing industry

Claim 21 has been amended.

Claim 21 as amended is directed to a multi-step clean-in-place method for cleaning hard surfaces in dairy operations including the steps of flushing the hard surface with a pre-rinse solution comprising water and a partially neutralized anionic polymer *and having a pH of about 4 to about 11* and including at least one other step which is either flushing the hard surface with at least one other rinse solution, that is acidic, caustic or neutral, or cleaning the hard surface with a main wash solution, or a combination thereof.

Applicants have amended claim 21 to further clarify that the rinse solution is not *caustic or highly alkaline*. See pages 16-17 of the present invention wherein a composition of the invention, solution B outperformed a highly alkaline industry standard composition, solution C.

Applicants submit that Troller does disclose conventional CIP operations which include steps of flushing and washing. Applicants submit that CIP operations are known in the art. As asserted in the Office Action, Troller does not disclose neutralized anionic polymers.

The Office Action asserts that Lange, in his Handbook, evidences that such surfactants were conventional in CIP formulations for the food processing industry, and that Lange further provides a discussion regarding properties of the referenced polymers.

Applicants submit that the formulation described by Lange in Table 5.15, page 125, is directed to a highly alkaline or caustic detergent having 20% NaOH in combination with 4% polymer. This is an excess of NaOH which would lead to a pH of higher than the pH range of about 4 to about 11, as recited in amended claim 21.

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Applicants have included a chart illustrating the affects of caustic soda, on the pH as the amount of caustic increases. Therefore, an excess of caustic soda or sodium hydroxide, results in a pH of 12 or higher.

Consequently, combining the caustic pAA containing detergent of Lange, in a CIP operation, does not lead one of skill in the art to a pre-rinse solution having a partially neutralized anionic polymer, and a pH of about 4 to about 11, as recited in amended claim 21, nor does the combination suggest such a pre-rinse solution to one of skill in the art.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 21-27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Troller (Sanitation in Food Processing) in view of Lange (Detergents and Cleaners. A Handbook for Formulators).

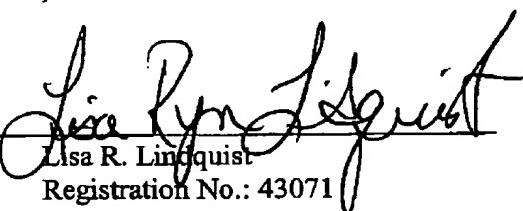
CONCLUSION

Claims 21-27 are pending in the application. Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and an early allowance of the claims as presented.

Respectfully submitted,

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